

**UNEA-7 Highlights:
Wednesday, 10 December 2025**

Delegates took the day to celebrate and learn from Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) as they gathered for MEAs Day at the seventh session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7). Before concluding its work, the Committee of the Whole (CoW) worked throughout the day on resolutions related to: nature and climate; governance and law; circular economy, chemicals, waste and pollution; and strategic, budgetary, and governing body matters.

Opening of MEAs Day

UNEA President Abdullah Bin Ali Al-Amri (Oman) opened the MEAs Day, stressing that combating common global environmental challenges demands unified, collective action.

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), highlighted that UNEA-7 has united over 170 countries and almost 30 global and regional agreements including the trifacta, which refers to the three science-policy bodies: the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP).

Bojan Kumer, President of the 23rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention (COP23), highlighted the 2016-2025 [Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development](#), aimed at aligning the region's socioeconomic goals with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He reported that the UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan supports a source-to-sea approach targeting pollution from land-based sources into the marine environment.

Mansour Hilal Almushaiti Alanazi, Vice Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture, Saudi Arabia, highlighted the Riyadh Global Drought Resilience Partnership launched at the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP16, which aims to combat the effects of desertification and support developing countries.

Via video message, André Aranha Corrêa do Lago, Vice-Minister for Climate, Energy, and Environment, Brazil, and COP30 President of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), underlined that COP30 had reaffirmed the possibilities that multilateralism offers, and underscored that cooperation is the answer.

Joswa Aoudou, Cameroon, spoke for the Presidents of the COPs to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions. He stressed deeper cooperation to leverage co-benefits, pointing

to strengthened cooperation with the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC), and the ISP-CWP, as well as with the Montreal Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UNFCCC.

Daniela Durán González, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia, spoke for the CBD COP16 Presidency. She underscored that climate change, desertification, biodiversity loss, and pollution are deeply interconnected, and will require interconnected solutions while ensuring the integrity of the relevant MEAs' mandates.

Jeanne-Marie Huddleston, Chair, Executive Body of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), noted that air pollution is among the greatest risks to human health, pointing to the 2025 [G-20 Cape Town Ministerial Agreement on Air Quality](#), and stressed the need to strengthen synergies across MEAs and maximize co-benefits.

High-level Dialogue: Turbocharging MEAs Implementation through Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society Approaches

Moderator and keynote speaker David Obura, IPBES Chair, opened the session. In his keynote address, he stressed the essential balance between nature, economies, and societies, noting that this dialogue centers on nature as the foundation of sustainable development. He outlined IPBES' focus on nature's resilience, understanding the drivers of change, and recognizing the plurality of nature and the deep knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) developed over millennia.

ZIMBABWE, speaking as Ramsar Convention on Wetlands COP16 host, reported that delegates had adopted 25 resolutions to support ecosystem restoration and sustainable development. CHINA outlined their progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and tackling chemicals and plastic pollution, calling for enhanced MEA synergies, and increased financing and technical support to bridge capacity gaps. MEXICO identified four key tools: political will translated into national plans, inter-sectoral mechanisms, financial alignment, and interoperable data systems.

The EU highlighted the cross-cutting nature of the European Green Deal and the importance of institutional coherence and democracy for MEA implementation. UNECE highlighted best practices from hosting five MEA Secretariats, including: whole-of-government capacity-building; development of intersectoral policy tools; integrated data and science; policy integration platforms; and stakeholder engagement through clear processes.

The CBD stressed integrating MEA commitments into budgeting, coordinating across government entities, and engaging

all stakeholder groups in decision-making. UN WOMEN called for centering gender equality in MEA implementation and state mechanisms, and for gender-responsive finance.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES called for Indigenous knowledge to be central to MEA implementation. PALAU highlighted their efforts to link food production, biodiversity conservation, and fisheries management while preserving 80% of their exclusive economic zone. TANZANIA highlighted a whole-of-society approach in developing their National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP).

HUNGARY highlighted international cooperation across sub-national and intergovernmental levels and stressed the importance of education. TÜRKIYE emphasized a holistic approach to policies and showcased national synergies across the Rio Conventions. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE) pointed to their sectoral roadmap on sustainable development and MEA-aligned policies.

The BRS CONVENTIONS highlighted the cross-sectoral nature and life-cycle approach of the three conventions. The MULTILATERAL FUND reported on activities to support the Montreal Protocol's implementation, highlighting holistic engagement with industry. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES reported findings from the Environmental Conventions Index and called on the UN and governments to continue requesting knowledge communities for the evidence they require to act.

MOROCCO expressed commitment to ensuring implementation of their MEA commitments benefit all citizens and future generations. ARMENIA shared their commitment to a participatory CBD COP17 that also promotes synergies among relevant MEAs.

SRI LANKA underscored the need to bridge the gap between agreements and actions on the ground. ETHIOPIA underlined the need to embed MEA obligations in national frameworks. THE GAMBIA highlighted consultations with all stakeholders and MEA-aligned national policies.

OSPAR COMMISSION underscored the importance of a strong science-policy framework and working within an inclusive policy framework. The INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT highlighted a recent policy launch addressing environmental crimes under the Rome Statute. The PERMANENT COMMISSION FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC noted their longstanding work to ensure ocean health and productivity. LOCAL AUTHORITIES highlighted their work to promote whole-of-government approaches, underlining this is essential for implementing MEAs.

MALAWI stressed that MEAs provide the frameworks that assist countries to pursue resilient and just development pathways. FIJI underscored that Indigenous Peoples are custodians of customary land and fisheries and called for means of implementation for small developing island states (SIDS).

CAMBODIA pointed to their strong ministerial coordination mechanism and data systems. BANGLADESH highlighted links between NBSAPs, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Action Plans (NAPs), and budget allocations.

The REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT supported regional plans and cooperation for MEA implementation.

High-level Dialogue on Boosting SDG Implementation through the MEAs

Izabella Teixeira, Co-Chair, International Resource Panel, moderated the dialogue. In her remarks, she highlighted: the need to move beyond established multilateral practices amid a triple environmental crisis and alongside a triple political crisis of mistrust, misinformation, and populism. She urged synergies based on regional, national, and local realities.

In keynote remarks, Jim Skea, IPCC Chair, underlined that near-time adaptation and mitigation actions have more synergies than trade-offs with the SDGs; and noted that the IPCC's Seventh Assessment Report will increase focus on the SDGs, including justice and equity dimensions. The UNFCCC said greater synergies can be achieved through integrated national strategies that are aligned across sectors.

Underlining local-level stakeholder involvement to mobilize synergies, JAPAN highlighted efforts to conserve seaweed. PERU drew attention to regulations to conserve and sustainably use wetlands, and highlighted programmes valuing Amazon peatlands as carbon sinks as strategic investments in the future.

FINLAND highlighted that they have incorporated circular economy principles in their national mineral strategy and introduced national targets for resource use. ETHIOPIA highlighted that they have aligned their development plan with a climate resilient strategy and banned the import of fossil fuel cars.

The MINAMATA CONVENTION underscored cross-sectoral mercury phase-out co-benefits, highlighting health and economic dimensions. The CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA (CITES) emphasized that integrated approaches linking biodiversity conservation with dependent socioeconomic sectors contribute to poverty reduction, food security, health, and biodiversity protection.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH lamented the fragmented MEA implementation landscape and urged phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies.

SENEGAL called for: harmonized MEA implementation; upholding the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; and promoting ambitious technology transfer. TÜRKIYE highlighted the role of holistic approaches, such as the Synergies Collaboration Platform for implementing the Rio Conventions, noting national uptake to strengthen interagency coordination.

MEXICO underlined the advantages of nature-based solutions, noting mangrove restoration has co-benefits spanning climate mitigation and adaptation, storm resilience, biodiversity protection, and contributes to sustainable livelihoods. UAE outlined national projects with SDG co-benefits, including renewable energy programmes that cut emissions and build economic resilience.

The BERN PROCESS underscored that focusing on sectors merely replicates the conversation on silos and highlighted the appetite for multidimensional projects. The RAMSAR CONVENTION ON WETLANDS underscored that wetland ecosystem services constitute more than 7% of the world's GDP and pointed to alignment between their strategic plan, the SDGs, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF).

The MONTREAL PROTOCOL described the Convention's success despite exemptions for certain economic activities, harmful to the ozone layer, until feasible non-ozone-depleting alternatives can be developed. ASEAN CENTRE FOR

BIODIVERSITY highlighted the role of regional technical cooperation centers for translating MEA ambition into coherent action and accelerated progress toward the SDGs.

The INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN) stressed green budgeting and called for a joint work programme across the Rio Conventions and beyond to ensure coherent policies and data comparability, with shared indicators. UN OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES lamented continued investments in activities that harm the environment and reported on supporting projects driving market change and delivering co-benefits for MEAs.

FARMERS stressed that SDGs rely on the stability of global agriculture, which is intrinsically connected to water governance – thus making discussions on fisheries, the Sargassum bloom crisis, and karst formation, as well as illegal trafficking, very relevant.

MALDIVES noted MEAs and SDGs implementation requires an integrated sectoral approach, synergies, and co-benefits, urging finance for SIDS. NAMIBIA highlighted a holistic approach and earmarking funds for environmental restoration, stressing that financial products should offer incentives for green practices, pointing to green bonds. The UK, citing the IPBES Nexus Assessment, called on delegates to engage with IPBES as “science gives us clarity, and collaboration gives us strength.”

The CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES (CMS) stressed that the common threat needing to be addressed is the prioritization of economic growth, which drives all environmental crises. The CBD, recognizing some progress on blended finance, stressed the need to redirect funds from harmful subsidies toward sustainable models, while preserving industry. OSPAR COMMISSION noted their cross-sectoral nature and reported on efforts to gradually prohibit dumping of scrubber water discharge within internal waters and ports.

FIJI stressed that: MEAs bring structure and coherence to sustainable development; the SDGs cannot be achieved alongside harmful investments; and integrating MEAs into national plans lowers costs for achieving SDGs. BRAZIL highlighted sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), which is often missing from MEA conversations, and urged progress on this.

The INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION said that their work seeks to transform shipping to ensure economic activities are environmentally sustainable. LOCAL AUTHORITIES urged the UN Forum of Mayors to work toward the localization of MEAs alongside SDGs localization. WOMEN called for reporting systems that honor the lived experience of women, youth, and frontline environmental defenders, and said citizen science can be an engine for MEAs’ target monitoring.

Discussions on MEAs Day Conclusions

Ligia Noronha, UN Assistant Secretary-General, and Head, UNEP New York Office, moderated this segment, inviting panelists to reflect on how to better integrate cooperation with and among MEAs.

On whole-of-society approaches, IPBES Chair Obura underscored that the IPBES Nexus Assessment is clear on the need for actions “for and by all people,” stressing the role of people beyond decision makers in delivering solutions. He reflected on the need for MEA mandates to evolve over time to ensure they remain fit for purpose, and of reversing antagonistic financial flows harming people and nature.

Teixera called on delegates to persevere with promoting synergies beyond the UN, and for convening “nature, power, and

climate politics” to overcome the triple planetary and political crises.

Batbaatar Bat, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Mongolia, shared a national perspective on implementing MEAs and promoting coherence and alignment among them. He underscored that “no one can achieve MEAs alone,” and called for stronger synergistic and technical partnerships.

Hambarzdum Matevosyan, Minister of Environment, Armenia, highlighted experience in mainstreaming biodiversity across ministries and noted that a nexus approach makes risks and opportunities more visible, while strengthening the scientific basis for policymaking.

Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, BRS Conventions, underlined trust as key to enabling synergies, and stressed that the Green Climate Fund not only brings together all thematic MEAs but also allows for equal-footing engagement with the private sector and civil society.

Chizuru Aoki, Head, MEAs Division, Global Environment Facility (GEF), highlighted that systemic challenges require systemic solutions, and reported on the integrated trust funds approach that allows countries to be flexible in using GEF resources to address their challenges holistically.

The EU stressed projects’ finance must follow the Green and Clean principle and called on cooperation between MEAs, the private sector, and financial institutions. RWANDA reported on efforts to update and align policies with MEAs, calling on Parties to implement the MEAs and on Secretariats to strengthen knowledge-sharing and capacity-building.

CITES urged UNEA to strengthen cooperation among MEAs by exploring shared priorities, convening cross-sector dialogues, and championing digital tools. CBD suggested strengthened UNEP engagement with UN country teams and MEA focal points.

The MINAMATA CONVENTION noted that their COP 6 had requested initiation of cooperation with IPBES to support their Convention’s implementation.

The OFFICE OF THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS stressed that MEAs must be interpreted in light of international human rights law, as a critical area for synergy across MEAs, and expressed concern at efforts to build walls between multilateral spaces in the UN.

The MULTILATERAL FUND drew attention to the need for collaboration among different funds. The ASEAN CENTRE FOR BIODIVERSITY underscored the importance of effective national coordination mechanisms that involve local governments and data-sharing mechanisms among stakeholders. CHILDREN AND YOUTH urged identifying joint objectives, rules, and responsibilities across MEAs.

Committee of the Whole (CoW)

International environmental policy and governance issues: CoW Chair Joyelle Clarke (Saint Kitts and Nevis) opened the session and called for reports on the work of the contact groups.

Reporting from Cluster A on nature and climate, Co-Chairs Kanako Okano (Japan) and Marie Haraldstad (Norway) announced that agreement was reached on draft resolutions on the Sargassum seaweed blooms, coral reefs, and the management of fires. They noted that agreement could not be reached on the draft resolution on deep sea ecosystems, which Vanuatu agreed to withdraw. Agreement could not be reached on the draft resolutions on karst ecosystems and glaciers and the broader cryosphere. On the latter, only one bracketed provision remained after deliberations.

From Cluster B on governance and law, Co-Chairs Sara Elkhoully (Egypt) and Martin Rów (Germany) reported that agreement was reached on draft resolutions on engagement of youth, synergies, and sports. They noted that the draft resolution on crimes affecting the environment was not discussed this week. They noted that delegations had not yet reached agreement on draft resolution on artificial intelligence (AI).

Reporting from Cluster C on circular economy, chemicals, waste and pollution, Co-Chairs Michal Novotný (Czechia) and Ontumetse Ontumetse (Botswana) reported that agreement was reached on the draft resolution on minerals and metals, but shared that consensus was close on the draft resolutions on antimicrobial resistance, and on sound management of chemicals and waste.

Reporting from Cluster D on strategic, budgetary, and governing bodies matters, Co-Chairs Tobias Ogweno (Kenya) and Nader Al-Tarawneh (Jordan) recalled that delegates had earlier agreed on the draft decision on the management of trust funds. They noted that, on the draft decision on the dates and venue, one paragraph related to the seventh edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7) remained bracketed. On the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and Programme of Work (PoW), they called for more time to reach consensus. They noted that Mexico had withdrawn their draft resolution on strengthening UNEP headquarters and had submitted a new resolution on the matter, which it would introduce during the UNEA plenary.

In the ensuing discussions, several delegations including SWITZERLAND, RUSSIAN FEDERATION, SAUDI ARABIA, UK, QATAR and the EU lamented this reintroduction noting, among others, the lack of time for negotiation of the resolution. They requested clarification on the procedure of reintroduction of resolutions following their withdrawal.

The UNEP Legal Advisor clarified that Mexico's submission of a new proposal was within their rights, as outlined in the rules of procedure, which allows submissions no later than one day prior to their consideration.

PERU noted that the withdrawal of their resolution on enhancing the international response to address crimes that affect the environment did not reduce the importance of the topic and the need for a response to deal with the challenges. NORWAY and URUGUAY called on Member States to strengthen work in this area. BRAZIL stressed that the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and UNEP could cooperate within their respective mandates on this matter. The EU noted that UNEA could have given UNEP a clearer mandate on this issue.

TÜRKIYE lamented the politicization of issues on water, noting that water security is a key environmental challenge and urged UNEP to mobilize means to advance this sector in developing countries. FIJI lamented attempts to renegotiate or dilute language on the special circumstances of SIDS.

VANUATU withdrew their resolution on deep seas ecosystems, noted that the urgency of safeguarding ocean ecosystems remains valid, and announced the launch of a next-phase science initiative for deep-sea science for knowledge sharing including indigenous science.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, NORWAY, AUSTRALIA, SWITZERLAND, TUVALU, URUGUAY, and FIJI lauded this initiative as a first step in consolidating knowledge of the deep sea, noting their readiness to engage. CHILE said such knowledge is key to fill the gap in deep sea for implementation of the High Seas Treaty and other ocean-related commitments. COSTA RICA stressed that the lack of a global technical mandate should not prevent interested Parties from working on this issue.

CANADA and AUSTRALIA expressed disappointment over lack of recognition of Indigenous People's rights in the agreed

resolutions. BRAZIL stressed that retaining Indigenous Peoples and local communities as one term does not dilute rights of Indigenous Peoples and lamented the lack of agreement on means of implementation text across many resolutions.

URUGUAY called on Member States to constructively engage on the draft resolution on sustainable management of chemicals and waste.

INDONESIA withdrew their resolution on karst ecosystems, noting that in light of the lack of consensus, it is the best way forward, and announced they will continue collaboration on the matter through other avenues.

TAJKISTAN welcomed broad consensus on the draft resolution on glaciers and broader cryosphere, calling on delegates to finalize consultations on the outstanding paragraph with good will and flexibility.

The CoW took note of withdrawn resolutions and agreed to transmit seven resolutions to UNEA-7. CoW Chair Clarke provided guidance for the way forward on the outstanding drafts, calling on delegates to work in informal settings on Thursday, 11 December, towards finalizing work on the draft decisions and resolutions. She noted that any text from these deliberations should be submitted by 12:00 pm for translation; and that any texts after this time will be considered in English only.

IRAN and TÜRKIYE noted difficulty in participating in multiple parallel sessions. Several, including EU, FIJI, and SAUDI ARABIA also requested a more structured programme and support from the Secretariat. CoW Chair Clarke thereafter advised that she would request the UNEA-7 President to work closely with the cluster Co-Chairs and the Secretariat to support structured meetings for the finalization of work.

Adoption of the report and closure of the meeting: Delegates adopted the meeting report ([UNEP/EA.7/CW/L.1](#)), introduced by CoW Rapporteur Nino Tandilashvili (Georgia). CoW Chair Clarke thanked delegates, the Secretariat, and the UNEP staff, and closed the meeting on Thursday, 11 December at 12:19 am.

In The Breezeways

Midway through UNEA-7, many welcomed MEAs Day as an opportunity to share best practices on integrated action to address the triple planetary crisis, with several noting additional links to economic development. "A day like this reminds us just how integrated everything really is," gushed one delegate, excited that UNEA is getting its "We are the World" moment. And her sentiments were echoed when one participant stressed, "No water, no farms! No farms, no food! No food, no peace! No peace, no hope!" Another, at the end of the session's long speakers list, expressed his wish that there had been "more time for actual dialogue."

As delegates shared their experiences in implementing their MEA obligations, negotiations on the resolutions and decisions, also concerning actions to address environmental crises, continued at a frenetic pace. Delegates met in all formats from contact groups to informal-informals, and even over coffee, to resolve the remaining differences, buoyed by some success overnight in approving the resolution on coral reefs. They were only partially successful, though, managing to clear half of their in-trays.

As the CoW drew to a close, through the smattering of applause, outstanding issues still loomed large, including decisions pertinent to UNEP's operations. Having officially ran out of time, delegates scrambled to agree on working modalities that would be suitable. Only time will tell whether their last-ditch efforts will suffice to advance sustainable solutions for a resilient planet.